

Callum Innes  
Darker than blue

September 13<sup>th</sup> – November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024

Alfonso Artiaco is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition at the gallery of the Scottish artist Callum Innes (Edinburgh, 1962), titled *Darker than Blue*.

Opening on Thursday, September 12th at 7:00 PM, in the presence of the artist.

For his first solo exhibition at the gallery, the artist presents 13 new large and medium sized paintings and a series of eight works on paper.

Abstraction and layering, colour and removal. Callum Innes's artistic practice consists of several steps, long preparation times that evoke chromatic atmospheres.

His paintings are luminous geometries in which black or white oil paint alternates with bright, striated colours, from blue to purple, from yellow to red. Works that starting from the same rigorous approach achieve a wide range of colour effects in which the depth of shades can be perceived.

Two types of works are on display: the "Exposed Paintings", square-shaped paintings on linen, and circular paintings on plywood, which the artist refers to as "Tondos."

"Exposed Paintings" are created in a series through a slow and intense process of layering of oil paint applied to linen canvas, which is then covered with black paint. The work is now hidden under a dark layer that is partially removed through numerous washings with turpentine, which dissolve the paint and leave behind the effect of streaked hues. This process is repeated several times, alternating fresh colour applications with those of the solvent which erases them. The part of the canvas that remain black is then painted with another colour, creating a bright and changing surface.

The "Tondos" series, a more recent production that creates a somehow sculptural presence of the work in space, is made with a very similar process but requires a different physical interaction of the artist. Indeed, Innes uses circular panels of plywood that require preparation with gesso and varnish, from which arise resultants of ever-changing colours but that keep a rigorous geometricism. After painting on square surfaces for years, Innes noticed how the round shape takes up more space and spreads differently on the wall. The absence of angles promotes a more dynamic and engaging sense of interaction between the viewer and the work.

In the gallery, the works alternate as tone-on-tone backgrounds in which the space of the painting is precisely marked out: the two-dimensional nature of the works is only apparent, hidden in the depths of streaks and shading, in a measured division of voids and solids. Callum Innes' paintings place the viewer in front of abstract, cadenced landscapes whose rhythm is provided by the slow layering and transformation of colour.

Callum Innes (born in Edinburgh, 1962) lives and works in Edinburgh and Oslo.

He studied at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen and Edinburgh College of Art.

In 1995 he was shortlisted for the Turner and Jerwood prizes (won in 2002) and he won the NatWest prize for painting in 1998. His works are held in public collections around the world: Guggenheim-New York, Centre Pompidou-Paris, National Gallery of Australia, Tate-London, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. A major exhibition, *I'll Close My Eyes*, was presented at the De Pont Museum, Tilburg, NL in 2016-17, and in 2024 KODE in Bergen, Norway, dedicated a solo exhibition to him.

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